



# Tiānjīn & Héběi

POP 110 MILLION

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## Best Ancient Towns

- » Chéngdé (p133)
- » Jímíngyì (p141)
- » Yújiācūn (p132)
- » Zhèngdìng (p130)

## Best Temples

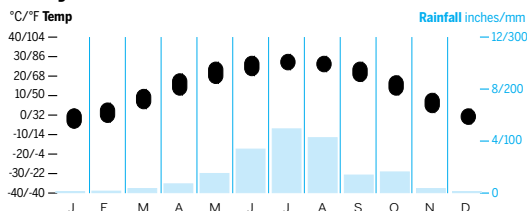
- » Lóngxīng Temple (p130)
- » Monastery of Deep Compassion (p123)
- » Pǔníng Temple (p136)
- » Tàishān Temple (p142)

## Why Go?

A slow-moving panorama of grazing sheep, brown earth and fields of corn and wheat, Héběi (河北) is Běijīng's back garden. Cosmopolitan Tiānjīn (天津) may put on a dazzling show, and providential economic feng shui from Běijīng lends a sparkle here and there, but arid Héběi's main charms are its timeworn and earthy textures. More than anything, Héběi offers the chance to disengage from Běijīng's modernity and frantic urban tempo, and experience a more timeless China. Wander through ancient settlements and walled towns, skirt the wild edges of the former Manchuria and journey to the majestic 18th-century summer retreat of the Qing emperors in Chéngdé. There are temples galore to explore, or just head for the hills and little-visited towns whose ancient rhythms and rural seclusion make them the perfect retreats.

## When to Go

### Tiānjīn



### Mar & Apr

Avoid the intense summer crush and roasting north China weather.

### Jun & Jul

Get bronzed on the beaches of Běidàihe.

### Sep & Oct

Catch the fresh Héběi autumnal weather (not too hot, not too cold).



## Tiānjīn & Héběi Highlights

- 1 Say *zàijiàn* (goodbye) to China's growing urban sprawl in the centuries-old stone village of **Yújiācūn** (p132)
- 2 Be rendered speechless by the colossal multiarmed occupant of **Pǔníng Temple** (p136) in **Chéngdé**
- 3 Steal across the Liáoníng border to see **Jiǔménkǒu**

**Great Wall** (p141) plunging into the Jiǔjiāng River

- 4 Step back in time in the ancient walled town of **Jímíngyī** (p141), China's oldest surviving postal station
- 5 Explore the temple town of **Zhèngdìng** (p130) and size up the giant metal statue

of Guanyin in the Lóngxíng Temple

- 6 Wander the grand, European-inspired streets of the former foreign concession areas in **Tiānjīn** (p122)
- 7 See where the Great Wall meets the sea in **Shānhǎiguān** (p139)